

water, there is not a single dollar dedicated to deal with the drinking water in the recent environmental degradation of the Great Lakes along New York, Pennsylvania, Michigan, Ohio, Wisconsin, Illinois, Minnesota, and Indiana. We have a bipartisan bill to dedicate \$4 billion over 5 years to restore and upgrade the environmental quality of the Great Lakes where drinking water is provided for 40 million Americans, equal to the amount we are pledging for 1 year in Iraq.

Just this week, we are talking about spending \$4 billion for the Iraqi police. Yet the administration's budget cuts \$1 billion for the 100,000 police program here in the United States.

So what I did is produce a T-shirt. It envisions and puts on the front the President's reconstruction budget for all of Iraq and Afghanistan, the two proposals. On the back are the cuts here at home in the respective areas of health care, education, veterans health care and veterans hospital, veterans benefits, but also the cuts in job training and job growth.

In the last 2 years, Americans have lost 3 million jobs, 45 million Americans are without health insurance, 25 million of that 45 work full-time but have no health insurance.

We have taken 4 million Americans out of the middle class and put them in poverty and nearly \$1 trillion worth of corporate assets have been foreclosed on. That is the net result of the economic policies.

We have a vision for Iraq with an additional \$20 billion of reconstruction dollars, of American taxpayer dollars being spent on their roads, their health care, their ports. Um Qsar, a great port in Iraq, is being redredged. Yet we have a 10 percent cut in the Army Corps of Engineers here in the United States, which all of us use to keep our economic vitality and job growth in our districts.

The same values that we hold for Iraq we must pledge for all Americans. The same goals we envision for Iraq's future we must envision for America. Unfortunately, we have had two priorities, two sets of values, two sets of books, one for Iraq, their children for tomorrow and one for America.

I do not think I will ever not support our efforts in Iraq, but I will not support the deconstruction of the United States, and somebody can be cynical enough to now see how the votes for Iraq's reconstruction can be compared to what we are doing here at home, a \$90 billion cut in Medicaid, compared to the 13 million Iraqis who will get universal health care. Somebody could see that as wrong; opening up new universities in Iraq, while we cut \$500 million from Pell grants here in the United States.

So I ask my colleagues on the other side as they consider on the eve, and I understand the pressure of being loyal to our President and loyal to an administration's goal, to think about what this means what we are doing here at

home. Americans over the last 40 to 50 years have been very generous. They have funded the Marshall Plan, brought Europe back to its feet, helped build Japan after World War II. They have continually donated and helped other countries, but America will not be generous if the dream of a tomorrow for America is diminished compared to the dream we hold for the Iraqi people.

So as we are on the eve of debating the \$87 billion, we need to support our troops; but we need to support our people here at home for their education, their jobs, their health care, their economic development of their communities and the safety of their communities. We should treat our veterans who come home with the same respect we are treating the forces in Iraq that we are trying to rebuild.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. NORTON addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

THE REAL STORY OF IRAQ

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 2003, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. CHOCOLA) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

This recognition is without prejudice to the resumption of legislative business.

Mr. CHOCOLA. Madam Speaker, I rise tonight to talk about the vote that we as Members of Congress are going to be asked to make in the near future and that is a vote we have already heard about tonight and that is the \$87 billion appropriation to support our men and women in uniform and the citizens of Iraq.

This is a lot of money, there is no question. And there is much commentary and maybe even some people would say much rhetoric revolving around this issue, but as we decide how to vote as Members of Congress and the American people develop an opinion on how they feel about their tax dollars being invested in this manner, I think it is imperative that we understand the real story of Iraq. I think it is imperative that we get beyond the rhetoric and the politics because this issue is way too important and has implications for generations to come, what the answer to the question about supporting the men and women in uniform

and the citizens of Iraq with \$87 billion is going to be.

I think we have to rely on facts, and the only way that we can understand the facts and discover the facts is to go seek them out for ourselves. That is why I went to Iraq not too long ago. I returned about 3 weeks ago, and I commend other Members of Congress that have taken the time and taken the effort to go find out for themselves what the real story of Iraq is.

I have to admit, when I went, I went with apprehension, and I did not go with apprehension because I was concerned about my personal safety. I went with apprehension because I was concerned that I would find the story of hopelessness, of pessimism because I had read the papers and I had watched the television, and it did not look like a pretty picture; but when I returned home, I had great optimism and I had great hope because what we see on TV and what we read in the papers is not the real story of Iraq and is not representative of what is actually happening on a day-to-day basis in that country.

When we landed, I really could not believe I was in the same country that I had seen on TV and read about in the papers. This was not a country in chaos. This was not a country where one felt unsafe and in fear for their personal safety. It was a country that was recovering from a scar of over 30 years of a brutal regime that its people had to live under. Sure, there are challenges that we are going to face and there are tragedies that happened, but there is also great hope, and there is great optimism because there have already been great successes.

The problem is the good news is not news. When a torture chamber that used to house Saddam Hussein's political prisoners gets turned into a police academy where tens of thousands of Iraqi police have been trained to protect their citizens and protect their country, no cameras show up, no reporters show up. When a school reopens, in fact when 1,000 new schools have been built in Iraq, there is not one reporter; and there was not one camera. When the power comes back on, when businesses can operate on a consistent basis, when restaurants can open, there are no reporters and there are no cameras. When the crop is harvested, thousands of acres of wheat, again, there are no reporters and no cameras, and businesses are opening every single day; but again, it goes unreported. But when there is one tragedy, certainly every camera and every reporter in the country is covering that story.

But for those that have visited Iraq, those that have actually taken the time and the effort to go, it cannot go unnoticed because a success is so clear and so obvious and so exciting and inspirational that we come back and we tell our stories. This is not a partisan issue. This is a situation where Republicans and Democrats have come back